

HIGHER EDUCATION

## British Council project to strengthen partnership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The British Council yesterday launched a project titled 'INSPIRE' to strengthen strategic partnership in higher education between the UK and countries in Central and South Asia.

Top universities in Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the UK will collaborate on internationalising institutions, research and higher education standards under the 6 million pounds project.

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam launched the project at a ceremony at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

The project International Strategic Partnership in Research and Education (INSPIRE) will focus on the subjects of Environment and Climate Change, Renewable and Alternative Energy, Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering and Fine Arts.

The project will be run by four main programmes, including Strategic Partnership Awards, Partnership Exploratory Grants, Talented Researcher Exchange Opportunities and Education Policy Dialogues.

The Strategic Partnership Awards will develop institution-to-institution links that involve a range of departments and subjects, resulting in multi-dimensional, international partnerships. The talented Researcher Exchange Programme will provide opportunity for early stage researchers over 40 with travel awards a year enabling them to acquire new cutting edge skills, participate in international research teams and network with others in the same field.

Applications forms, guidance notes and other relevant information are available on INSPIRE website [www.britishcouncil.org/inspire](http://www.britishcouncil.org/inspire)

Peter Ashton, acting director, British Council Bangladesh, delivered the welcome speech and brief programme outline at the ceremony and Raiqah Walic-Khan, education promotion and marketing manager of British Council, and vice chancellors of different universities and senior academicians of the country were also present.